@ Rs. 75/- p.m. to destitute persons over 65 years of age, lump-sum family benefit of Rs. 5000/- and Rs. 10000/- respectively to the families for natural death and accidental death of the primary bread winner and maternity benefit of Rs. 300/- per pregnancy for two live births. The scheme is expected to benefit 5.3 million, 3.5 lakh beneficiaries and 4.5 lakh women workers respectively.

In addition to the above, the Central and the various State Governments have taken up several Insurance and Social Security Schemes like Rural Group Life Insurance Scheme, Group Insurance Scheme for Landless Agricultural Labourers in 1987 under the Social Security Fund of the LIC for providing insurance cover to all landless agricultural labourers in the age group of 18-60 years and the insurance schemes for IRDP beneficiaries in 1988. Besides, State Governments are running old age pension schemes with varying eligibility criteria and pension rates.

*[Translation]*

**Necessity of English in Entrance Examination**

*417. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the medium of entrance examination for courses in Railway Engineering and other trades organised by railways is English;

(b) if so, the names of training and educational institutions and examinations for jobs for which English as a subject is compulsory; and

(c) the hurdles is removing compulsion of English language in all training and educational institutions and entrance examinations for jobs held by his Ministry along with other places where it is compulsory?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PAWAN) : (a) to (c). No Sir, Indian Railways do not conduct entrance examination for such Courses. However, for recruitment to Group 'A' posts, examinations are conducted by Union Public Service Commission.

Question papers of examinations for jobs conducted through Railway Recruitment Boards for Group 'C' posts are set in bilingual form i.e. English and Hindi. Progressively, in a phased manner, the questions in General English are now asked with questions in Hindi of equivalent marks with option to attempt either of the two. This system has been introduced for 30 categories. The possibility of extending this scheme to another 35 categories is being explored. In the next phase other categories will be considered except in case of posts where knowledge of English is considered necessary e.g. English Teacher, English Stenographer etc.

For examinations for jobs in Railways, English as a subject is not compulsory in training and educational institutions.

*[English]*

**Fibre Optic System**

*418. SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI
PROF. JITENDRA NATH DAS

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any proposal for linking all major cities along the coast with a submarine fibre optic system for high quality telecommunication network;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any survey has been conducted to know the cost effectiveness of such project, vis-a-vis current long distance DOT network;

(d) whether such super information system will also be extended to cities of the Gangetic plains to achieve the objectives of the Indian Telecom Policy;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. A proposal was received from VSNL during 1994 for a project named "JALMALA" which was for providing connectivity to 26 Stations around the coast of peninsular India starting from Bhavnagar in Gujarat to Calcutta. The proposal was laying a submarine optic fibre cable for a total distance of 4800 kms with a 2+1 system of 2.5 Gbps having a channel capacity of 60000 circuits and with a total cost of Rs. 760 crores.

(c) The estimated cost per km in this project works out to approximately 3 times the cost of current long distance DOT optical fibre projects.

(d) to (f). There was no proposal form VSNL to extend this project to cities of gangetic plains. However, DOT has planned very high capacity optical fibre networks to link all the major cities proposed in the above project as well as the cities in the Ganetic plains. The details of the 10 projects planned by DOT are furnished in the enclosed Statement.

**STATEMENT**

*Details of 10 High Capacity Projects Planned by DOT.*

1. ND-Ambala-Chandigarh-Ludhiana-Jallandhar-Bhatinda-ND STM-16 Ring
2. ND-Moradabad-Lucknow-Varanasi-Allahabad-Kanpur-Agra-ND STM-16 Ring
3. Cal-Patna-Varanasi-Ranchi-Calcutta-STM-16 Ring
4. ND-Agra-Bhopal-Indore-Jaipur-ND- STM-16 Ring
5. Mumbai-Indore-Ahmedabad-Mumbai STM-16 Ring